

1Corinthians 12:8 "The Word Of Wisdom And The Word Of Knowledge"

1 Corinthians 12:8 ⁸ For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit;

As we consider the gifts of the Holy Spirit we must always keep in mind that it is God who gives these gifts to His people in Christ for the specific purpose of building each other up, so that we might be better equipped and motivated to take the gospel out to the world.

The gift or gifts we have are not toys. They are not meant for our amusement or entertainment. They are meant to be understood in the context in which they've been given, and that is they are spiritual tools, given by God, to be used in a spiritual battle which effects our everyday lives.

They are also not to be neglected. These gifts do not come from the hand of God so that we might put them under a barrel. A spiritual gift that is not used is a gift which is useless, at least in a practical sense. Just as every member of the body of Christ is vital to that local body, so is the gift or gifts of those individuals if that body is to grow and mature in the way God intended.

You look at the wonders of your physical body like the hand which has the gift of grasping, unlike the foot. But the foot has the gift of propulsion unlike the ear which captures sound.

And so, if a part of our natural body, which is unable to utilize its intended purpose, is seen as an encumbrance, so in the spiritual body of Christ, when a part of the body is not utilizing his or her intended purpose through their gifts, they are in essence not helping the growth and vitality of that body.

It's all tied together; the gifts, the one gifted, the Gift-Giver, all working together for the advancement of the Kingdom of God to the glory of the Lord, and the encouragement of all the members in that body as they are using their gifts for each other and the world.

And so, as we come to the first set of gifts in our text may we consider their proper purpose and use within this body.

1Co 12:8 "To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,...."

Other translations, including the KJV and the NASB would use the phrase "the word of wisdom" and "the word of knowledge". These two gifts of the Spirit, like the other gifts, are supernatural in nature. These are not simply some talent or natural ability one may possess through any normal means.

Again, the Spirit of God gives gifts to the Body of Christ that we may be built up and edified, so that we as believers may grow in our faith with the express purpose of having Jesus Christ lifted up in our lives.

Now, these two gifts in our text are different from wisdom and knowledge as we normally understand wisdom and knowledge in the way in which they are usually obtained.

Knowledge is a gathering of information about any particular person, thing or situation. A military commander, for example, gathers information or intelligence about his adversary; their strengths and weaknesses, their numbers and equipment, the sight of the potential battle field, and he looks at all of that in light of what he knows about his own troops and equipment.

Wisdom is the best use of knowledge for any particular circumstance. And so, that same commander takes the information, based on past experience, along with battlefield doctrine, and he uses wisdom as he now best utilizes all of this information to assure success.

In the spiritual realm every believer is encouraged to seek the knowledge of God. This is precisely why Peter can say to us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2PE 3:18)

This is also necessary as far as wisdom is concerned. Every believer must take that knowledge of God, found in His word, and use it wisely to the glory of God. And if we lack wisdom, as James says, "we should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Godly wisdom comes from God. And when we understand that God's wisdom allows us to truly honor Him then we will seek after it diligently. This is the reason that Solomon speaks of Godly wisdom the way he does.

Pro 8:11 "for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her."

And so, every believer, without exception must seek knowledge and wisdom in the things of God and His word. But not every believer will receive *the gift* of the word of wisdom, or the word of knowledge, which comes directly from the Holy Spirit.

The word of wisdom, as found in our text, is made up of two Greek words. *Logos sophia*. The word *logos* is the same word which is applied to Jesus in the gospel of John.

Joh 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

That Greek word *logos* for the "word" also means, 'something said including the thought.' And in Joh.1:1 it means Jesus is expressing all of who God is.

The Greek word for wisdom is *sophia*, and it means wisdom, broad and full of intelligence.

The word of wisdom is not limited to one word but includes the thought the Spirit desires to convey to those He's gifted. This gift allows a person to have a wisdom in certain instances that allows them to lift up the name of Christ and accomplish the desire of God for that situation.

This gift of the word of wisdom goes beyond the wisdom we must all seek after in Christ. Being wise and having the gift of the word of wisdom are not necessarily the same. Also, the word of wisdom is not a gift of wisdom, as though one becomes super-wise all the time; rather it is a word of wisdom enabling one to speak or act for the Lord in a way where the Spirit provides the means for one to be wise as serpents and yet innocent as doves, giving glory to God in a particular circumstance.

Let's look at some examples in Scripture of how the word of wisdom might be applied. First, we have a glimpse of how God will give a word or message of wisdom when Jesus explains to His disciples how they will be empowered to witness for Him on special occasions.

LUK 21:12-15 "But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13 This will result in your being witnesses to

them. 14 But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15 For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict."

Jesus explains how the Spirit will supernaturally give wisdom for the occasion for the work of service and to further God's will. Keep in mind that wisdom is always connected to knowledge and even the gift of the word of wisdom cannot be divorced from knowledge which must still conform to God's written word.

In the case of the disciples having the wisdom to deal with the rulers and authorities, we know they will be conveying the knowledge of the truth of the gospel and the word of God, but being in an unprepared state for such a confrontation the Holy Spirit will bring to mind what they need to say and how they should deal with that particular situation to the glory of God.

In Luk.21:15 Jesus says, "For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict."

In other words, there will be a supernatural intervention which only the Spirit could accomplish, without which the disciples could not adequately carry out God's will in that situation.

This is a gift of the Spirit in that He is allowing them to partake in the wisdom of the Spirit which permits them to wisely handle accurately the word of truth. This is a Spirit-given wisdom outside of the realm of the natural way in which they may have handled that situation.

It's interesting to see how Jesus acted in ways which the Jews of His day could not contend with or explain. In His wisdom He confounded the Jews while at the same time expressing truths which point people to the Father who sent Him.

In one way Jesus was demonstrating this word of wisdom, and He expressed this on many occasions. Now with Jesus He didn't simply have the gift of wisdom, He is wisdom. But through the example of His earthly life we see how this gift for His people can work itself out practically in the life of one gifted with this gift.

By the way, the argument that the gift of the word of wisdom or knowledge was meant for only a select few for a select time in church history defies the clear teaching that these gifts were given by the Spirit to ordinary Corinthian believers, not just to apostles or elders.

If anyone were to demonstrate how these gifts were to be best utilized it would be the example of our Lord Himself, and so in using these examples we are not suggesting that we can be like Christ in the exact same way, only that He is the best example.

Remember, knowledge is knowing something, wisdom is knowing what to do with that knowledge. Let's look at a variety of passages where Jesus is the example of the Spirit's work in His life.

MAT 22:15-22 "Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. 16 They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. 17 Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? 19 Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, 20 and he asked them, "Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?" 21 "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away."

In those times when extraordinary wisdom is needed, that we might be used of God, the Lord may give you such wisdom and you may not even be aware of it until after the fact. It may be a verse of scripture He brings to mind to minister to someone. It may be the way you share Christ with an unbeliever.

Henry Gainey who was once involved with the Calvary Chapel in Tallahassee conveyed a true story of a woman who was living in NY City and happened to be in Central Park, and there was a Professor from some college there.

The two of them were discussing the Bible and this educated man ate this woman's lunch, spiritually speaking, as they discussed the things of God. She was a brand new believer and she couldn't go toe to toe with this guy. But the Lord gave her a wisdom which was undeniable.

He would bring up an argument and she could only reply, 'sir, I don't know about that but I know this, the bible says, "the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." She was quoting Rom.6:23.

Once again he would come up with something which he believed disproved her faith. And once again she said, 'sir I don't about that but I know this, the bible says, "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This guy threw up his hands in frustration and told her essentially that she was foolish to believe such things. The next day they were both back in the Park. He saw her and came up to her. His eyes were bloodshot, he looked ragged and he told her that he couldn't sleep all night.

He asked her what it was she said the previous day about this wage and this free gift. She shared the gospel and the man came to Christ. She could have tried to sound intellectual the previous day but God gave her a special wisdom for that situation to stick with a very simple message, and the Lord used it to bring this man into the Kingdom. It was wisdom in simplicity which turned out to be profound as God used it.

Having a lot of bible knowledge and wisdom was not a prerequisite for her receiving this word of wisdom from God. Again, that doesn't mean we shouldn't seek God's knowledge and wisdom, but this gift God may give to anyone of His people as He desires, be they one day in the Lord or 20 years in the Lord.

This is a gift we may pray for, but as with any gift it is meant to be used in the service of God. And only God can gift you for the occasion. It's like the filling of the Spirit. You may not know you need it until God places you in a situation which would require it, and yet we're all told to pray for it.

This is why we can't think of the word of wisdom as some sort of permanent state of super-wisdom; making us the wisest in the land. It is used for special times that the Spirit deems special, to accomplish God's will to His glory, not to puff ourselves up.

In fulfillment of what Jesus spoke of in Luk.21:12-15, concerning how His disciples would be taught what to say when brought before the authorities, we see the fulfillment of this and the gift of the word of wisdom in practice in the book of Acts when Peter and John were involved in healing a lame man.

We read in ACT 3:6 "Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

It was precisely because of this incident that the Jewish religious rulers confronted Peter not to speak of this Jesus, in whose name this man was healed.

Here's how Peter responded.

ACT 4:9-15 "If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone. 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14 But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15 So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together."

In fulfillment of what Jesus said, these ordinary uneducated fisherman eloquently articulated the truths which the Holy Spirit enabled them to share in such a brilliant way that the Sanhedrin was astonished and ended up calling "time out" to regroup.

What's interesting about the word of wisdom in this case is that it is coupled with boldness which comes from Peter being filled with the Spirit. And if you seek to be used by God and are willing to walk where He leads, you too will be filled with the Spirit to do His work, and He may very well give you the gift of the word of wisdom.

Now the gift of the word of knowledge is another gift of the Spirit as He imparts knowledge to someone which they would not have been able to know otherwise.

He may use it in conjunction with the knowledge we have of the scriptures but this knowledge from the Spirit will be used in a way to give information about something or someone for the purpose of being informed to better pray about a situation, or to help in ministering to someone.

Like the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge is made up of two Greek words. "Word" is *logos* and "knowledge" is *gnosis*

which means to know, or knowledge. It's where we get our English word diagnosis. A doctor takes the knowledge he has and prescribes according to that knowledge. (Dia-gnosis)

This gift is not necessarily to be used as a spoken gift to others in general. Unlike the gift of prophecy, which is to be used within the context of the Body of Christ as a spoken gift, the word of knowledge must often be used with discretion in the Body.

Now, simply because one may receive the gift of the word of knowledge that doesn't mean that all of a sudden that person becomes all-knowing any more than someone who has a word of wisdom becomes all-wise.

The word of knowledge, is just that; particular knowledge given by God that He shares with you for a reason. This is not the kind of knowledge you could gain on your own.

This is not necessarily bible knowledge, which you could study on your own. Rather, this is information which God has allowed you to share in which He wants you to know. This is not a gift you can use at any time because the use of the gift is entirely up to God who supernaturally gives knowledge about something or someone.

Now, let me just say that it shouldn't be a gift we fear, thinking that someone in the church will always know the secret things taking place in our lives and that somehow they always have the ability to see and know our hearts at all times.

Only God is all-knowing or omniscient. Not even Satan can claim such knowledge. And only God truly knows the heart of a person. But there may be times when God will share something which is to be used to help a person, not destroy them. As with any gift we must use it responsibly and in love.

God may give you a word of knowledge about a person and the only thing He may want you to do is to pray for that person. Other times He may want you to go to that person in love.

There may be a problem in the life of a fellow believer who isn't willing to share it with anyone in the body. The Holy Spirit may prompt you to know what the problem actually is. And as you go to the person in love that person understands that God knows what's going on and the appropriate word of encouragement or exhortation can be given in such a way where action is taken because of the source of the knowledge being God Himself, who is personally concerned.

Again, we must not confuse the word of knowledge with biblical knowledge in general which every believer must seek after. The word of knowledge is like a snap-shot of a piece of information that God will supernaturally give you as He speaks to your spirit in the Spirit.

It could come in a vision, or a dream or even as the Lord simply speaks to your heart. The prophet Joel addresses this.

JOE 2:28-29 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."

Now, I would caution you not to take every dream you have and try to give it a twist which is always looking for a hidden message from God. But, there may be times when God will give you knowledge about something or someone through a dream.

Of course, as Paul tells us in 1Cor.13:1, love must be the thing which motivates us to serve God with whatever gift we may have, and the word of knowledge is no exception.

Where do we see this gift being used in the Bible? Well, like so many spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit was busy in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. In the Old Testament it was not identified as the word of knowledge, primarily because it was not a gift which was intended to be given to Israel in general, but only individuals specifically.

2KI 6:8-18 "Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place." 9 The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." 10 So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. 11 This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Will you not tell me which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" 12 "None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom." 13 "Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." 14 Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night

and surrounded the city. 15 When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. 16 "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked."

God was giving Elisha knowledge about the whereabouts' of the king of Syria. Elisha was not getting this knowledge through spotters he was sending out to spy out the camp of Syria. God gave him this knowledge. That is, in essence, the word of knowledge in operation.

We have another incident with Elisha in 2Kings.

2KI 4:8-17 One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. 9 She said to her husband, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10 Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us." 11 One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12 He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13 Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'" She replied, "I have a home among my own people." 14 "What can be done for her?" Elisha asked. Gehazi said, "Well, she has no son and her husband is old." 15 Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16 "About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms." "No, my lord," she objected. "Don't mislead your servant, O man of God!" 17 But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her."

Here God gave knowledge to Elisha about this woman conceiving. In this case the supernatural knowledge is also used as prophecy, as it was used to edify, exhort and console.

This, by the way, is the key to the way the N.T. gift of prophecy is to be used as we see 1CO 14:3.

"But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort."

Or as the NASB puts it: "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation."

I like the way Robert Gromacki in his commentary on 1Corinthians puts that verse of Paul's into perspective when he says the gift of prophecy "has a threefold goal: Build up, stir up, and cheer up."

That's what Elisha did for this woman. And sometimes gifts of the Holy Spirit will interact with other gifts the Spirit has for us.

Another area where we see this word of knowledge being used is in the case of Jesus.

JOH 1:44-50 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." 48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." 50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that."

In this case knowledge is given in the form of what appears to be a vision which Jesus saw concerning Nathaniel. As we mentioned a moment ago a word of knowledge may be given to you in this way as well.

Another example of our Lord is found with the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4:17-19 ¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband'; ¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly." ¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

Other times the Lord will simply bring something to mind. You could be at the grocery store and He may reveal something to you. But always keep in mind that a word of knowledge is to be used to help not hurt. And so always pray for wisdom when using this gift from God.

The gift of the word of knowledge is one more way which demonstrates how God is personally involved in the affairs of our everyday lives and how He desires to use us to further His kingdom according to His will, but we must still always exercise discernment as we test the spirits as we're instructed in the word of God.

As I've said before, whatever gift God uses in your life praise Him and use the gifts to edify the Body of Christ and do all in His power and love.

If you lack anything that would enable you to be a more effective servant for God, ask Him for the power, the gifts and the desire to walk in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a great privilege to be an Ambassador for Jesus, to be a soldier for Christ, to be a servant of the Most High God.

And if we're just willing to be used and we step out in faith and obey the Lord, He will use us and people's lives will be touched as Jesus touches them through us.